



Obesity's impacts on our Brain, Dementia, & Fertility

With reference to Michael Greger M.D. FACLM on January 14, 2025



Weight loss can decrease dementia risk and improve mental performance and fertility.

In the ABCs of the health consequences of obesity, A is for Arthritis, B is for Back Pain and Blood Pressure, C is for Cancer, and D is for Diabetes. That brings us to E, which is for Encephalopathy.

Encephalopathy means brain disease. There is consistent data linking obesity in middle age to a higher risk of dementia later in life. Researchers found that individuals who are overweight have about a one-third higher risk of dementia and those who are obese in mid-life have about 90 percent greater risk. The risk isn't limited only to future dysfunction, though. People with excess body weight don't appear to think as clearly at any age.

"It was found that obese participants showed broad impairments on executive functions" of the brain, including working memory, decision-making, planning, cognitive flexibility, and verbal fluency. "From resisting temptation to keeping long-term goals in mind, executive functions play a critical role in everyday life," noted a meta-analysis and review of 72 studies on the issue.

According to researchers, people may think about their obesity and the resulting stigma they experience as much as five times an hour, but the cognitive deficits do not appear to arise just from distraction; there are structural brain differences between individuals who are at an ideal weight versus overweight.

A review entitled "Does the Brain Shrink as the Waist Expands?" noted gray matter atrophy across all ages among those carrying excess body fat. It's this reduced brain volume that has been correlated with lower executive function.

Cognitive deficits in younger populations suggest there's something about obesity itself that is affecting brain function, rather than a later clinical consequence, such as high blood pressure. Purported mechanisms for this executive dysfunction include obesity-related inflammation and oxidative stress.

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This newsletter is produced by:

 **AutumnLeaves**
NZ LIMITED

PO Box 654, Rangiora, 7440, NZ
28 Southbrook Road, Rangiora, NZ
health@autumnleaves.co.nz
ph 03 313 7762
www.lifestyleworks.co.nz

Environmental Impacts of Plant-Based Meats

nutritionfacts.org Feb. 20, 2025

Environmental assessments of 50 different plant-based meats show them to be vastly more sustainable than animal-based meats. For plant-based foods to replace meat successfully, they must meet taste and texture preferences of meat eaters. Brands like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat focus on creating products that appeal to omnivores. Lifecycle assessments show that plant-based meats are about 90 percent more sustainable than beef in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, land, and water use, although using unprocessed plant foods could further reduce environmental impact.

Are Plant-Based Meats Good for Us?

nutritionfacts.org Mar. 04, 2025

Replacing animal protein with plant protein is associated with lower risks of mortality, especially from cardiovascular disease. Studies suggest plant proteins are linked to lower risks of cancer and diabetes, as well as improved long-term health outcomes, compared to animal proteins. Plant-based burgers (e.g., Beyond Meat and Impossible Burger) are better than traditional meat burgers in many aspects, like reduced saturated fat content. However, they still contain ingredients like coconut oil and added sodium, which mitigate their health advantages compared to whole plant foods like lentils or beans.

Is Sorghum a Healthy Grain?

nutritionfacts.org Feb 13, 2025

Sorghum, especially red and black varieties, has high antioxidant levels, comparable to some fruits and vegetables, which may benefit chronic disease prevention. It contains 3-deoxyanthocyanins, unique pigments that may help inhibit cancer cell growth and enhance liver detoxifying enzymes. It is gluten-free, making it a suitable grain for people with celiac disease, and its fiber content may aid overall digestive health.



So, does weight loss improve cognitive function? Based on a meta-analysis of 20 studies, researchers found that mental performance across a variety of domains can be significantly improved with even modest weight loss. However, no studies have yet to be done to determine if this then translates into a normalization of Alzheimer's disease risk.

Back to the ABCs of obesity's health consequences, F is for Fertility—or rather failed fertility. "Overweight and obese persons seeking fertility should be educated on the detrimental effects of fatness and the benefits of weight reduction, including improvement in pregnancy rates," one meta-analysis concluded. Men also may suffer impaired fertility. The heavier a man is, the greater his risk of having a low sperm count or being completely sterile. This may be due in part to the effects of excess body fat on testosterone levels.

Fat isn't the primary site of estrogen production in only postmenopausal women, but in men, too. An enzyme in body fat converts testosterone into estrogen. Men losing weight and going from obese to overweight could potentially raise the testosterone levels in their blood by 13 percent.

24 Realistic Ways To Improve Your Health

Confused by the avalanche of new and often contradictory information about health?

What if someone were to offer, with practicality and common sense, some basic instructions on living healthfully?

Tim Arnott has prepared 24 practical guidelines based on scientific research and the moral and physical laws given to us by God, which will help you to live happier and healthier.

Baked Carrot Cake Oatmeal



Ingredients:

1c rolled oats	1½t ground cinnamon
2T ground chia seeds	2¼C soy milk
2T ground flaxseeds	½C date syrup
1C grated carrot	1t vanilla
¼c chopped walnuts	

Method:

Preheat the oven to 190°C. **Line** a 20-cm square baking pan with parchment paper and **set** aside.

In a bowl, **combine** the oats, chia seed, flaxseeds, carrot, nuts, and cinnamon, and **stir** until well mixed. **Add** the soy milk, date syrup, and vanilla, then **stir** until well combined.

Transfer the oatmeal mixture to the prepared baking pan and **smooth** it evenly.

Bake for about 30 minutes, or until the oatmeal is golden brown and set. **Remove** from the oven and set aside to **cool** for 10 to 15 minutes before **servicing**.

Note: To save prep time in the morning, you can assemble this savory breakfast the night before and just pop it in the oven when you're getting ready to eat.

